

1609/5687.

Adonis Anthonis

This ~~good~~ man died in 1836!!

*A
Gave this Charles at Calne his Volume
of Sermons*

S E R M O N,

PREACHED

JUNE 24, 1798.

BY

THE REV. GEORGE SCOBELL,

CURATE OF SHRIVENHAM, BERKS.

OXFORD,

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1799.

S E R M O N

THE

JUNE 1870

BY

THE REV. GEORGE SCOBELL

CLIMATE OF NEW-YORK, 1870.

OXFORD



THIS DISCOURSE,

THE LAST ADDRESSED

BY THE AUTHOR

TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF

SHRIVENHAM,

HE BEGS THEM TO ACCEPT

AS A MARK

NOT ONLY

OF KIND REMEMBRANCE

BUT

OF EARNEST REGARD.

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2 COR. xiii. 11.

X
FINALLY, BRETHREN, FAREWELL. BE PERFECT,
BE OF GOOD COMFORT, BE OF ONE MIND,
LIVE IN PEACE; AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND
PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU.

WELL knowing how deep and durable an impression the words of those who part make, not only upon the mind, but upon the heart, I venture to hope for all your usual attention to the little that I have to offer to you, for the last time, in the character of your spiritual friend: for of the relation, that has subsisted between us, nothing is now soon about to remain, but the record that is reserved for that great day of account, when our Lord shall come to reckon with his servants: among whom may it then appear, that we have endeavoured to employ our several talents with such care as has not allowed us to squander them away; and with such diligence, as has preserved them from rust.

The sacred words, to which you will for
the present confine your thoughts, circumstances

B



stances not altogether unlike the present called from the pen of the great Apostle ; who, with the instructive, the affectionate, the pathetic sentiments that they express, concluded his last address to those who, as it should seem, from these and other words, had long been the peculiar objects of his pious care : for though, in a manner that bespoke his tender concern, he had bade them a final farewell, still, as if loth to part with those whose best interests he had so near his heart, he again earnestly recommended to them the practice of those lessons that he had so often inculcated ; again urged them to shew examples of the truths he had laboured to explain ; again exhorted them to be PERFECT, TO BE OF GOOD COMFORT, TO BE OF ONE MIND, TO LIVE IN PEACE ; THAT THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE MIGHT BE WITH THEM.

You will observe the peculiar method of the sacred Teacher, who, as usual, in exact and elegant order, begins his sententious lesson by a precept so general in its nature, as to include all the virtues that follow, and that combined may be said to complete the Christian character: not that he represents any thing



thing that is impossible as necessary ; not that he insists upon our unavailing endeavours to attain to something that is out of our reach ; not that he calls upon us, in our present state, to climb the inaccessible heights of absolute perfection ; but rather teaches us, rather encourages us, to direct our eyes towards the conspicuous object upon the untrodden summit ; and, still in view of it, to keep our constant course along the plain that lies before us, with an undiverted expectation, with an uninterrupted hope, of the prize, the glorious prize, that awaits them who, in due time, shall reach their appointed goal. Calling upon us to be perfect, he calls upon us to consider how capable we are of better things ; to study our utmost possible improvement, to avail ourselves of our peculiar opportunities, to use the abundant means given to us, to learn such lessons as the wisest could never teach, and to look to such examples as the best could never shew ; to direct ourselves, upon all occasions of conversation and of conduct, by the words and the actions that the Evangelists record.

BE OF GOOD COMFORT in all circumstances, whether of prosperity or adversity ;

have a firm confidence and reliance on God, an entire resignation to all the dispensations of his Providence, and an unfeigned submission to all his fatherly corrections ; looking only for consolation to the promises made to those who, patient in well-doing, endure to the last.

BE OF ONE MIND. Attend to the same thing ; pursue, as with one common wish arising from the united hearts of spiritual Brethren, that which ought to be the chief, if not the only end of all your desires and all your designs: pursue with that temper of mind that not only suits, but marks those, that have **ONE FAITH AND ONE HOPE**, with forbearance of each other, with allowance for unavoidable differences, with candour for those who doubt, and with charity for those who disagree ; still through all your lives pursue the glory of him, whom in your prayers you call the **GOD OF PEACE**, and from whom you cannot hope to obtain any thing, unless you **AGREE TO ASK**.

LIVE IN PEACE with each other ; in that peace that is necessary for the due use of common means, and the sure attainment of common hopes ; in that peace that can alone enable

enable you to avail yourselves of the means of grace, and to aspire to the hopes of glory : live like those who know that all vain disputes and idle quarrels must destroy present comforts, and that all violent and acrimonious dissensions may endanger future expectations : live like those who well know that men have many occasions for mutual services, that neighbours have as many opportunities of rendering such services, and that Christians place all their trust in the promises made to those who improve such opportunities.

If thus, by your honest and earnest endeavours, by study that may prepare you for practice, and by practice that may arise from study, you attain to such dispositions, such habits of mind, you will improve yourselves as much as may be in your present state : called as you have been, in respect to that state, to be PERFECT, you will, as far as its circumstances may allow, answer to the call ; in sentiments so pure you will lay the foundations, by actions so holy will raise the pillars, of that simple but sacred structure, in which the Spirit, that dwelleth not in TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS, will deign to abide, THE SPIRIT OF LOVE AND PEACE.

While in this manner you review the several distinct but connected parts of the last advice that the Apostle gave to the Corinthian Christians, you will probably remember, that you have upon former occasions been invited to consider them, and therefore will easily apply them to the circumstances of the present times. Upon the character of these times you will not think it necessary for me to say much ; for you know it well : you have often fixed your reasonable and religious eyes on its particular and prominent feature ; you have often remarked the wide difference between profession and practice ; have often been amazed, and still oftener grieved, to see a holy religion outraged by intemperate zeal, and disgraced by lukewarm indifference. You may sometimes have dreaded the activity of its enemies, but you have oftener lamented the indolence of its friends : by the violence of the former you may have occasionally been alarmed ; but by the cold attachment of the latter you continue to be hurt. While you hear that they who have never been instructed presume to teach, and they who cannot find their own way profess to guide others, you may have been at a loss often for a lesson, and very often for an example :

ample : you may at times even have determined to stand still, unwilling to proceed, lest you might be hurried off the ground by the tempestuous breath of a fanatic, and afraid to return, lest you might be led into a pit by the insidious hand of an infidel.* While, in this cheerless suspense, you have looked around you on those whom you suppose to be prepared, as you know them to be appointed, to be your spiritual preceptors, you have been astonished to find that even their knowledge has often had but little effect upon their conduct : and you have perhaps lamented that they, who have been allowed to attain to the possession of truth, have not been enabled to shew its intended influence upon their lives : but from the strange inconsistency of those who, content to repeat their ineffectual lessons, may be said rather to think than to act like Christians, you may have learned in some measure to account for the inattention of many, and for the impatience of some, among their hearers ; for general ignorance of the most important truths, and consequently for general corruption ; perhaps even for the punishments incurred by that depravity that is spread through a people, for the judgments

* 2 Peter ii. 10—19.

that press not only upon individuals, but upon nations. In your moral view of the manners that prevail in your native land, you see sufficient reason for those judgments : in general corruptions you see the occasion of general miseries : in the vicious habits of the luxurious inhabitants you find the causes of the evils inflicted upon an affluent country. You well understand how among the many some are so left to themselves, that in a riotous enjoyment of undeserved abundance they correspond with the enemies of all property, and how some are so set beside themselves, that in a delirious abuse of their liberty they unite to overturn all law. Whilst with others you suffer the evils that a few seem to bring upon all, you will consider that they are instrumental not to their own but other purposes ; you will see in them not the sources but the channels of a national chastisement. Extending your thoughts from yourselves to others, and still as you reason rising from individuals to a people, you will conclude, that IT IS GOOD, not only for each, but for all, TO HAVE BEEN AFFLICTED. Thus, as long as you continue to hear near you the whispers of traitors, and at no great distance the the shouts of rebels ; as long as you

you continue to apprehend at your very doors all the dangers of conspiracy, and know that others not far from your homes suffer all the calamities of civil war, you will comprehend how upon private offences public punishments may be inflicted : and thus conceiving how for the INIQUITY OF A PEOPLE A NATION IS SCOURGED, you will learn under the very lash to avert other and heavier evils : you will learn to look into yourselves, to review your past lives, to repent, and to reform : you will, as you wish to be happier, even in this life, endeavour to become better : you will, as you desire that wars should cease abroad, resolve to cultivate peace at home : you will hope that others, in a similar manner considering their own neglected condition, and at last consulting their best interest, may reform themselves : but at any rate, convinced that public prosperity depends upon private virtue, and that the character of a people is formed by domestic habits, you will determine to reform yourselves : you will hasten to add your mite to the stock of national virtue ; nor will you think that you can be real patriots, unless you are sincere Christians. This happy resolution you can soon bring to effect ; for you already have, or easily may

may have, all the directions that you can want, and all the assistance that you can receive. Copies of the sacred writings are now so multiplied, that the poorest may possess the invaluable volume; and such are the opportunities of public and of private instruction, that the most ignorant may soon understand its most important pages.

Were we thus to see this important, this essential knowledge prevail among us, we might then indeed BE OF GOOD COMFORT; we might then indeed take courage, afraid neither of the terrors that lurk under the cover of night, nor of the pestilence that destroyeth at the noon-day: for though the arrows of affliction might fly abroad, they would not come nigh us: though the elements themselves might be shaken, He, who "rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm," would avert its fury from his people, would be gracious unto them, would in due time bestow upon them the blessings of peace.

Such indeed is our religion; such the means that it affords, and the hopes that it awakens, that they who know it thoroughly, and live according to it, have in themselves
abundant

abundant resources against all the evils of their present state, against all the changes and chances of this life : so that to be unhappy, really unhappy, they must forget their religion, must for the time cease to be Christians : for as such they ever look beyond their present condition ; in the want of the good things that this life affords, or under the weight of its heaviest burdens, they look forward to that time that will bring abundance and repose : depressed as they may be by poverty, or worn away by disease ; though they may suffer much from injuries, and more from insults, they still keep the even tenor of their minds ; still press on along their well known road, with undiverted attention, with unsubdued spirit ; like guests that tarry but a day, or rather like those who hasten to the end of their destined pilgrimage.

While then as Christians we have these hopes, let us not allow ourselves to be bereft of the means : let us not suffer ourselves to be misled by those who secretly and silently study to divide and distract us ; who misrepresent, because they are determined to decry, the best institutions of a free government ; and ridicule, because they cannot refute,

fute, the trueſt doctrines of a pure religion : let us turn away our offended ears from them who CALL EVIL GOOD, AND GOOD EVIL : let us rather liſten to him who teaches us to BE OF ONE MIND : let us, attending to his leſſon, learn to think alike on all important matters, both civil and religious : let us learn to ſee, in the laws that our country has eſtabliſhed, all that the wiſe can do for the general good, and in thoſe that it has received as divine, more than they can do for the good of each : let us learn to reſpect the inſtitutions of a ſtate that has already been tried for ages, and to revere the ordinances of a church that is BUILT UPON A ROCK.

While you are ſometimes condemned to hear thoſe, who are yet allowed to abuſe indulgencies that they little deſerve, by rude aſſertions or by artful inſinuations, that under your government there is no liberty, and in your religion no truth, that you have no freedom as long as you obey any one, and no knowledge as long as you believe any thing, you will remember to try their words by their actions, or by the actions of thoſe who, as you well know, have now been long accuſtomed to uſe ſuch words : when you
will

will soon find reason to think that their opinions are dangerous, since all who have been so incautious as to admit them have found them destructive. From the experience of others you will learn to discover the intentions of insidious enemies, and to be upon your guard against doctrines inconsistent with all liberty, and repugnant to all religion: you will understand that by such lessons they mean nothing more or less, than to render their hearers subservient to their own secret purposes: that they COMMUNE NOT FOR PEACE, BUT IMAGINE DECEITFUL WORDS AGAINST THOSE THAT ARE QUIET IN THE LAND: thus, not beguiled by WORDS THAT ARE SOFTER THAN BUTTER, AND SMOOTHER THAN OIL, you will be aware that they who use them HAVE WAR IN THEIR HEARTS: and you will be prepared to consider them as VERY SWORDS. From the industrious attempts of such dangerous deceivers, my brethren, you cannot be safe, unless you learn to BE OF ONE MIND, to set aside private animosities and party hatreds, unless you are continually careful, how, in the smallest degree, you may even seem to think as they think. To be unanimous is at all times the interest of all men;

men; but it is the duty of Christians, who are in a particular manner reminded of it by the circumstances of the times; as they who are busiest in their dark designs against us, rest their chief hopes on the divisions they can occasion, and on that account endeavour as much as possible to sow the seeds of dissension. By a moderation, that they well know how to effect, they hope to entice the good to countenance their proceedings; though as soon as ever their turn is served, they are resolved to destroy them, as unfit, most unfit for their further purposes. You may thus see in your very interest a reason for your duty, reason to agree as much as possible in your religious notions, reason to check the doubts that you may not be able to examine, and to submit your serious scruples to the authority of the Established Church. Inattentive to this reason, you will allow yourselves to be TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT BY EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE that may issue from the unauthorized mouths of self-prepared, self-appointed teachers: you will allow yourselves to be led by those who cannot find their own way, or even by those who are lying in wait to mislead your feet from their accustomed tracks:—
with

with less prudence, surely, than you shew upon occasions that are not nearly so important : you never look to a lawyer for the recovery of your health : you never leave to a physician the care of your property : why then should you commit the care of your spiritual concerns to those whom you cannot think fit for the due discharge of so difficult a task, as long as you know that they are neither gifted on a sudden, nor gradually prepared, neither inspired nor educated?

Thus then, as you understand your real interest, as you have a true regard for your happiness, as you are ambitious to be accounted the disciples of your Saviour, **LIVE IN PEACE**; in peace that is not soured by strife, nor embittered by envy ; in peace that you seldom interrupt by a disagreement, and never destroy by a quarrel ; in peace that prepares the mind for the habits of love to all ; not only to those who deserve it, but to those who may merely want it ; that pure, extended and exalted love, that our Saviour has declared to be the mark of his Disciples. Indeed, unless you shew that you have this love for each other, you continually contradict yourselves : unless you shew it by your
 forbear-

forbearance and forgiveness, you condemn yourselves as often as you pray for your DAILY BREAD. In vain do you pretend to real religion, as long as you neglect this fundamental principle; for IF A MAN LOVE NOT HIS BROTHER, WHOM HE HATH SEEN, HOW SHALL HE LOVE GOD, WHOM HE HATH NOT SEEN? Nor is it our duty only that commands us, but our interest also, to throw aside all anger and hatred. Let a man consult his own sensations, as often as he feels the thorn of resentment rankling at his heart; and then, as soon as those sensations will permit him to reflect, let him consider, whether he can possibly inflict on his enemy a punishment, that by its severity may seem to compensate for his own torments.

Such then is the perfection, to which we must endeavour to attain, if we would be Christians indeed, and such are the means by which we may hope to reach it. Now let no one think that it is an excellence beyond his aim; but let each resolve to exert all his powers for the attainment of a possible perfection; considering that every step he advances towards it will bring him to the immediate enjoyment of a proportionate reward:

ward : let him consider that the path is easy and pleasant, nor let him be afraid that he may sometimes be at a loss for its unfrequented track : let him but remember the short and simple direction given to him as he sets out : let him, like others who have gone before him, rely on the mercies of his Maker, and the merits of his Redeemer. Thus, under all the casualties of life, may all learn to be of good comfort, for all have it in their power to avoid divisions and parties, and to be of one mind with their neighbour ; to be humble in their opinions, diffident of their talents, and submissive to the sentiments of those who, by their prudence and experience, may be supposed to know better than themselves. All have it in their power to live in peace and harmony with others, for all who wish may avoid the occasions of dispute : and they who are surprized into such situations may still smother the first sparks of anger, as they kindle in their breasts. In these dispositions of their minds they have the best proofs of their spiritual progress ; from these affections of their hearts they derive the best hopes of their future happiness.

That you, my brethren, may have these
 proofs,

proofs, and that you may feel these hopes, let me now, for the last time, pray you to continue diligent, as you have been, in the discharge of your several duties : let me pray you who are rich, to avail yourselves of the means given, and, in some measure like him WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD, to seek occasion to help your poorer brethren, to relieve their distresses, to sympathize with their sorrows, and still, as you find them on their uneven road through life, to pour balm and oil into their wounds : let me pray you who are poor, to fill your stations in the manner that becomes you, with the sobriety and industry that you owe to your families, with the obedience and fidelity due to your masters, with holy fear and humble resignation in the presence of your Maker ; remembering that he has placed you in your present circumstances for the best and wisest purposes ; that he has bestowed on you many advantages, and required but few duties : learning, even by comparison of your situation with that of others who may seem more fortunate, that in your little leisure you are not disturbed by their temptations, and that in your simple pleasures you are not distracted by their cares :

cares : conscious at all times that you have in common with them their best comforts and their highest enjoyments ; all their real consolations, and all their substantial hopes : let me pray you, who best know how important it is that the young mind be duly prepared for the discharge of future duties, to continue among the poor your liberal distribution of necessary knowledge ; that thus SUFFERING THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO you, you may preserve minds, that are yet innocent, from all the evils of ignorance, and prepare many to be useful to others, and happy in themselves ; to be faithful servants, industrious labourers, and honest neighbours.

With these last prayers, by which you will see that your departing Minister not only exhorts but intreats you to attend to your real interests, he might close the short period of his service : but sensible as he is how much that service has been softened by civility and hospitality, by attention and respect, that it would indeed have been his praise to deserve, he cannot but feel, though he will not lament, the pain of separation. Such a sensation he must certainly experience, as he now finds himself no longer

able to witness your wants and your wishes, no longer able to be present to your fears and your hopes : but he indulges in this sensation but little, for he recollects that no changes, however adverse, no chances, however severe, can destroy such a connection. In an union like this he knows, and trusts that you know, there is a spirit superior to the accidents of this life ; a spirit, that, not disturbed either by length of time, or by distance of place, still prompts those, who have been bound together by bonds of brotherhood, to assist each other in an interchange of the sincerest services, by prayers that ascend in unison to the ear of their common Father. Let him then in leaving you, suppress all other emotion in the hope, that for him who has endeavoured to instil into your minds the most important truths that he has received, to explain to you the faith that all who will be saved must understand and believe ; to teach you to fear God, to honour the King, and to love your neighbour ; to remind you of the duties peculiar to your several stations in public and private life ; to make vice odious, and impiety horrible ; to shew you, in their real colours, all the comforts of a good conscience, and all the

the blessings of a religious life ; to give confidence to those who have believed, and to remove the scruples of those who have doubted, you will, as one, be willing and able to offer up the prayer that AVAILETH MUCH : THE EFFECTUAL PERVENT PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS. For this hope of the blessing, that he may certainly expect to receive from the petitions of those who upon such an occasion AGREE TO ASK, he assures his brethren, that he shall to his utmost power endeavour to make the best return, by continued prayer, that among them, as among those who are PERFECT, who are OF GOOD COMFORT, who are OF ONE MIND and LIVE IN PEACE, THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE may ever be. With this sincere assurance he bids them a farewell—a final farewell.

THE END.

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